DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 161 EC 230 848

AUTHOR Dunn, Janice
TITLE An In-Service Program To Foster the Teaching of Life Skills to Moderately Retarded Elementary School Students.
PUB DATE 16 Jan 89
NOTE 56p.; Ed.D Practicum Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Daily Living Skills; Decision Making Skills; *Developmental Disabilities; Elementary Education; Home Economics Skills; *Inservice Teacher Education; Mental Retardation; *Moderate Mental Retardation; Self Care Skills; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This practicum report was designed to foster the teaching of life skills to moderately retarded elementary students, the goal being teacher implementation of appropriate life-skills programs for developmentally delayed students. A 2-day workshop was developed to allow teachers from different communities to share strategies and materials. Follow-up classroom visits were provided. Results indicated that all 15 teachers who participated included life-skills training in their programs for developmentally delayed students. Appendixes include evaluation materials and an observation checklist. Contains 32 references. (Author/PB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319161

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

An In-service Program to Foster the Teaching of Life Skills to Moderately Retarded Elementary School Students

by

Janice Dunn

Cluster 31

A Practicum 1 Report presented to the Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1989

EC230848

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Janice Dunn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: William Carter

William G. Carter
School District Superintendent
Bonavista-Trinity-Placentia Integrated School Board
P. O. Box 2001, Clarenville, Newfoundland, Canada

05/01/90
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Janice Dunn under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

01/14/90
Date of Final Approval of Report

JoEllen Salce Rogers, Ph.D.,
Advisor

Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance and support of the District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and colleagues at the District office and the cooperation of the teachers involved in the implementation of this practicum.

The writer wishes to thank Dr. JoEllen Rogers, Practicum Advisor, for her helpful suggestions and encouragement.

Table of Contents

		Page
Acknowledgements		iii
Table of Contents		iv
Abstract		vi
Chapter		
I	Introduction	1
	Description of Work Setting Description of Participants Writer's Role	
II	Study of the Problem	4
	Problem Description Problem Documentation Causative Analysis Relationship of the Problem to the Literature	
III	Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments	21
	Goals and Expectations Objectives Measurement of Objectives	
IV	Report of Action Taken	27
	Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions Description and Justification for Solution Selected	
V	Results, Conclusions and Recommendations	30
	Results Conclusions Recommendations Dissemination	
References		36

Appendicies 39

A Post-Test 41
B Post-Test 43
C Post-Test 45
D Observational Checklist 47
E Evaluation Form 49

Abstract

Implementation of an In-Service Program to Foster the teaching of Life Skills to Moderately Retarded Elementary School Students. Dunn, Janice E., 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Teaching methods/learning strategies/elementary education/daily living skills/self-care skills/decision making skills/home economics skills/adaptive behavior/homemaking skills/job skills/communication skills/mental retardation/ moderate mental retardation/trainable mentally handicapped/ physical disability.

This practicum was designed to foster the teaching of lifeskills to moderately retarded elementary school students. The goal was that teachers would implement appropriate lifeskills programs for their developmentally delayed students. They would teach their students the skills necessary for independent or semi-independent living.

The writer provided a two day workshop which gave teachers from different communities the opportunity to share teaching strategies and techniques, plan in groups, share materials and problem solve together. The writer provided follow-up through classroom visits with each teacher.

The results of the practicum were positive. Analysis of the data revealed that all of the fifteen teachers involved have included lifeskills in the program plans of their developmentally delayed students.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Work Setting and Community

The work setting of the writer is a school district of approximately six thousand square kilometres in rural Canada. All of the communities in the district are situated along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The largest community has a population of approximately five thousand while the smallest has a population of less than five hundred.

The school district maintains twenty-three schools, a central office complex and a resource centre. More than half of the schools are small with populations of less than three hundred twenty-five students. Several of these schools are located in tiny, isolated communities.

Most of the communities in which the schools are located are involved in seasonal primary production - fishing and farming. The community in which the central office is located is heavily involved in the service industry.

Description of Participants

For this practicum, the persons involved are fifteen teachers and forty-two students in thirteen schools throughout the district. Of the fifteen teachers, only seven have degrees in special education. Of the remaining eight teachers, one has no degree, one has a degree in primary education and six have degrees in elementary education. Six teachers have teacher aides.

Most ot the forty-two students would score within the moderately retarded range on an assessment of intellectual potential. Most have more than one handicapping condition.

The Role of the Writer

As a special services co-ordinator, the writer:

- is charged with the responsibility for district adherence to provincial special services philosophy;
- monitors, develops, refines and adapts school curricula and special services as directed by assessments of the needs of the school district;
- identifies, diagnoses and assesses curriculum needs;
- initiates, plans, organizes and delivers in-service in response to these needs;
- delivers initial and follow-up in-service for programs introduced by the provincial department of education and ensures that these programs and policies are implemented according to departmental direction;
- assists teachers with program delivery;

- co-ordinates program offerings at the district, system and school level;
- assists the superintendent in the formulation and modification of district special education policy;
- assists principals and teachers in the identification, location and acquisition of suitable materials for programs;
- evaluates school programs;
- assists as required in the selection and orientation of new teachers;
- monitors and supervises school programs to help ensure that their philosophy is clarified and their objectives achieved through consistent classroom applications;
- assists with the formative evaluation of teachers;
- is responsisble for ensuring that transportation is provided for students with special needs.

The writer usually spends four days per week in the schools with the remaining day at the central office.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem was that teachers of developmentally delayed students were not systemmatically teaching them the skills necessary for independent or semi-independent living.

Developmentally delayed students were colouring and being assisted to complete worksheets which they cannot read. Teachers were writing directions on chalkboards for students who cannot read. Students were "integrated" into classrooms for a period during which they worked on an activity totally unrelated to that of the other children. When asked, neither teacher was aware of the other's objectives.

Among the students is one who had her first visit to a store at age fourteen, a fifteen-year-old who is capable of doing so but has not been taught to ride the school bus, a fifteen-year-old boy who can eat with a fork but needs someone to feed him when a spoon is required.

Provincial regulations determine the allocation of teachers. For one - two TMH students, 1/2 teaching unit can be allocated. For three students, 3/4 teaching unit is allocated. For four - six students, one teaching unit is assigned to a school. Many of the schools are small and do not have enough TMH students to warrant a complete teaching

unit. These classes are subject to a lack of trained special education teachers and a high turnover.

As the district is large geographically, these teachers are not able to consult with their peers. A teacher at one end of the district could travel two hundred kilometres to find another teacher with a similar student. The total student population for the 6000 square kilometres is 6800, with forty-two students who would score within the moderately retarded range.

The writer had attempted to deal with the situation by visiting the individual classes and discussing programming options with teachers. Due to the distance between schools, peer support groups had not been established, thus teachers tended to continue to teach or attempt to teach what was familiar to them -academics.

The problem was that developmentally delayed students were being taught, primarily, academics and non-functional skills rather than being taught lifeskills (skills necessary for independent or semi-independent living), in a systemmatic manner.

Problem Documentation

Since the beginning of school year 1988-89, the writer had observed for at least one full day in each of the fifteen class settings. Interviews with the teachers had confirmed that activities observed were typical of everyday. In seven classes, the writer had observed that the students

participated entirely in academically oriented activities. In the remainder of the class settings, with the exception of one, students were observed to participate primarily in academics and occasionally to participate in lifeskills. In one class setting, the curriculum had been developed to meet the individual needs of the students and was primarily lifeskills oriented.

In a survey of fifteen teachers of students in TMH classes in the writer's school district in March, 1989, it was reported by the teachers that from 0-20% of their class time in a typical week was spent on assessment/record keeping. The types of assessments reported included: anecdotal records, checklists, reading inventories, Brigance Developmental Records, Skills Inventories, Adaptive Behavior Scale.

The teachers reported that 0-80% of class time in a typical week was spent on academics. The types of activities reported included: Reading readiness, Math - e.g. number concepts and counting 1-5, science, writing, social studies, family life, hygiene, health, religious education, spelling, word recognition.

On the survey, "lifeskills" was defined as "those skills which the students will need to function successfully in community, domestic, social, leisure and/or vocational settings". The teachers reported that 10-90% of class time in a typical week was spent on lifeskills. The types of activities reported included: functional vocabulary and

reading, first aid, hygiene, attitude development, social skills, alphabetical order, shopping lists, buttoning and lacing, survival vocabulary, time-telling, matching colours, dressing/undressing, play activities, social interaction, maps, filling out forms, personal care, self-help skills - brushing teeth, washing hands and face, behavior, preparing snacks, etc. There is an apparent discrepancy between the observations of the writer and the reporting by some of the teachers.

All teachers, except one, indicated that all of the activities took place in the classroom/school setting. One teacher reported a visit to a local business.

The teachers were asked "What topics/areas of concern, etc. would you like to see addressed in future in-service for teachers of TMH students?"

Two teachers suggested behavior management techniques. One teacher requested information on teaching reading. All, with the exception of one teacher who did not answer the question, requested information on lifeskills.

Causative Analysis

Among the causes for this problem was deficits in teacher training. Of the fifteen teachers of TMH students in this district, seven have degrees in Special Education. The Special Education degree program offered at the only university in this province is a generalist program. There is no degree program which would provide for specialization

in the teaching of the trainable mentally handicapped. There is only one course offered in the the degree program, "Educational procedures for children with moderate mental disabilities", which pertains to the teaching of TMH students and that course is not required for graduation.

Another cause which contributed to the problem was the lack of appropriate teaching methodologies. A report of the Teacher Education Review Committee (1987, p.2) indicates a widespread concern that several members of the Faculty of Education at the province's only university may be contributing to new graduates lack of knowledge of the latest research and developments in the field of education. As well, there is a perception that some graduates are being exposed to outdated content and teaching methodologies.

In addition to possible exposure to inappropriate methodologies, is the fact that some teachers have no training at all in the area of exceptional children. Because of geography and provincial hiring regulations, particularly in the case of half-time teaching positions, it is difficult to find a trained person willing to take the job. Thus, it is quite possible to have a person trained to teach English or Social Studies who is assigned to teach two students who are not only not able to write a paragraph or design a map, but who cannot speak in complete sentences or find the bathroom without assistance. The teacher does not know how to teach those skills and turns to what is comfortable - academics.

Very important are teacher's beliefs about what is important. Many teachers generally and most of those who teach developmentally delayed students in this district in particular, believed that education means exposure to academics for all students. As well, it has been suggested that there is a deficit in teacher training programs, in general, in that teachers are not given the opportunity to apply theory in a real-life situation.

In this province, it is possible to attain a degree in education with the only practicum component being a two-week exposure to a classroom setting as a student teacher. As the teachers have not been exposed to anything other than academics in their own educational careers, it is not surprising that teachers believed that academics are important and therefore "academics are what teachers teach".

Another factor to be considered was that the philosophy underlying a lifeskills approach was not clearly understood by some teachers. An example of this lack of understanding was expressed in a conversation between the writer and one of the teachers who had been teaching her students about money. The writer suggested that at the end of the unit the students should be taken to a store to make a purchase. The teacher expressed surprise and asked "Am I supposed to do that?" She had not considered the practical use of money at all.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Why would one teach lifeskills rather than academics to developmentally delayed students? Browder and Snell (1983, p. 412) state that daily living skills are those competencies "required to maintain [a] home and personal appearance, in addition to using related community resources". They indicate that instruction in daily living skills for the handicapped is crucial for several reasons:

1. These skills are critical for placement in the community.
2. The skills are potentially useful for employment.
3. They provide an opportunity to incorporate a meaningful academic component.
4. Daily living skill instruction provides an opportunity for application of skills in natural settings under supervision.

Snell (1981) as quoted by Browder and Snell (1983,p. 412) states that

> success of the handicapped in community placements is a function of three interrelated factors: (a) the characteristics of the placement itself and the skills it requires for its residents: (b) the daily living, vocational and social skills of the handicapped clients; and (c) the absence of client behaviors that are bothersome to the community.

Students in TMH classes will eventually live in communities. The quality of their lives and their ability to be self-supporting and independent depends in large par

on the instruction they receive while they are in school. There was obviously a need for lifeskills instruction.

Browder and Snell (1983) report that predictors of successful community integration for adult mentally retarded persons include their ability to maintain themselves and their apparel, the ability to prepare meals, communicate with others and to make use of community facilities. They report that many persons studied had not received instruction in travelling, using the telephone, handling emergencies and using community agencies because it was assumed they could not learn the skill.

Teachers of developmentally delayed students take on the role of classroom co-ordinator, provider of special instruction and program developer. The teacher must be able to collate and integrate all of the information about a student into an individualized program plan designed to meet the needs of that student. The teacher must then implement the plan, evaluate it, and review the progress of the student and make recommendations for future programming.

It is obvious that a teacher of developmentally delayed students requires special preparation. The Alberta Department of Education (1983) recommends that all teachers of handicapped students should be competent in the areas of educational evaluation of handicapped students, programmed instruction, special training techniques, behavioral management monitoring and measurement, and the analysis and

teaching of academics, daily living and communication skills.

Many of the teachers of developmentally delayed students in this district are at a disadvantage in that they have not had the benefit of specialized training.

According to Snell (1978, p.483), an educational program indicates the need for a "pragmatic curriculum" as well as a "verified methodology which insures, as much as possible, that the specified curriculum targets are mastered". She suggests that in the past we have not seen successful products of programs for the handicapped due not only to "our lack of expectancy for the students to learn" but also to "unrefined teaching skills".

The Alberta Department of Education (1982, p.2) suggests that a highly structured program as well as consistent and on-going supervision are requirements for learning for a developmentally delayed student, "who is unlikely to achieve greatly in the academic area but does benefit from instruction in the living/vocational skills area...."

The perspective of Boyan (1978) is that lifeskills should be taught systematically throughout a child's school career, from pre-school to secondary, utilizing the facilities available in the community. He suggests that it is a large, complex task to teach lifeskills. However, he suggests that Wolfensberger's normalization tenet of "intensity of relevant programming" lends support to

scheduling many hours each week to lifeskills so that the student may attain a maximum level of independence.

In many school settings it is evident that age-inappropriate curricula was in use with developmentally delayed students. Lovett and Harris (1987, p.34) indicate that age-inappropriate curricula that have little bearing in community settings have resulted primarily from "(a) developmental literature on nonhandicapped children (b) professional judgements of producers of commercial products and (c) professional inferences regarding skills that may be necessary to function in nonschool environments". They suggest that many developmentally delayed individuals leave school without the necessary skills to function successfully in the community.

Vaughn, Bos and Lund (1986, p. 176) suggest that generalization techniques must be taught to ensure transfer of skills to new situations. They conclude that "transfer of behavior does not occur automatically, but needs to be planned and programmed as part of the training process". They suggest that systematic teaching strategies are required to facilitate generalization between settings.

Following his review of the literature Schuster (1988) recommended that all mentally retarded persons should be taught food preparation skills in natural settings. He suggested that the acquisition of these skills is critical if these students are to attain the goal of independent living. He confirmed the need for systemmatic teaching

strategies to facilitate generalization cited previously by Vaughn, Bos and Lund (1986).

Nietupski et al. (1986, p.259) suggest that "self-initiated and sustained leisure activity" is an appropriate goal to be pursued for students with moderate and severe handicaps. They suggest that students who are to use their free time productively in the absence of continuous adult supervision will have to be taught several suitable activities using systemmatic teaching strategies to facilitate acquisition of skills as well as generalization.

Browder et al. (1984, p.191) in describing the research on daily living skills conclude that most training packages have been evaluated for one type of skill and assessment of generalization has been omitted from many studies. They conclude that "daily living skills are critical to community independence". They suggest that in order to maximize effectiveness of instruction in daily living skills, teachers require procedures that are applicable to small group instruction, that promote generalization, and that can be replicated across skills.

According to Snell (1988, p.303) the ideal teaching strategies twenty years ago were "highly structured and teacher controlled". The best researchers of the day were promoting "behavioral structure and response control, unfortunately to the neglect of quality of life outcomes and the 'best' teachers followed in their wake".

She suggests that only when the instruction includes strategies known to promote generalization of skills taught can the learning difficulties of developmentally delayed students be minimized.

Wilgosh and French (1984) suggest that in order to assist moderately handicapped persons to lead a productive and meaningful life it is necessary to develop appropriate curricula. They indicate that some of the problems associated with such curriculum development include disagreement between parents and educators concerning appropriate objectives, no clear educational goals and lack of a systemmatic instructional program.

Langone and Burton (1987, p.150) indicate that parents and professionals have suggested the need to teach independent living skills to moderately handicapped learners. Reports of early programs indicate that they met with little success in integrating participants into the community. This has been attributed to the learning characteristics of the students - "memory deficits, difficulty in generalizing skills and difficulty in generating solutions to new problems". They suggest that "teaching programs are more successful when presented in the environments where the learners are expected to eventually exhibit the skills". Thus the teachers in this district have to include a practicum component in which the students can apply their lifeskills training in "real" settings.

Lewis (1989, p.9) states that it is not uncommon to find instances in which developmentally delayed students are taught age-inappropriate skills in artificial surroundings. He suggests that the scenario for the outcome of one such student might be described as follows:

> He can put one hundred pegs in a board in less than ten minutes while in his seat with 95% accuracy. But, he can't put quarters in a vending maching. He can sort blocks by colour ... But, he can't sort clothes: whites from colours, for washing...

Social skills and social competence are extremely important to the successful employment of handicapped persons. It has been suggested that while the termination of handicapped persons employment is associated with an "inability to display expected levels of social competence", those social skills have not been systematically identified and taught. Stowitschek and Salsberg (1987, p. vi); Middletown Public Schools (1985, p.5).

Baine (1988, p. 24) cites several studies regarding "readiness" skills. He suggests that "readiness tasks" may not be prerequisites to higher levels of performance. Although average children in North American and European environments are typically able to perform these readiness tasks, many of the children in Third World countries are not able to do so. He concludes that, frequently, the readiness

skills learned do not generalize to the actual desired behavior.

Luscre (1984, p.3) states that in order to maximize the potential of students, they must receive training in the community. "Training in the community ensures that students practice activities under the conditions characteristic of the real world rather than under the artificial conditions of the classroom or a facsimile".

Although many studies indicate the importance of teaching developmentally delayed students daily living skills, many teachers believe that they can "normalize" their students through academic instruction. Hirshoren and Burton (1979) indicate that the desirability of teaching higher level cognitive skills to retarded persons has been a consistent source of professional controversy. There is no evidence regarding the generalizability of these skills in the classroom or other open setting. The value of teaching higher level cognitive skills is questioned in that these skills tend not to contribute to the student's ability to function in his/her natural environment.

Wolfensberger (1972, p. 7) describes an ideology as a combination of "beliefs, attitudes and interpretation of reality that are derived from ones experiences, ones knowledge of what are presumed to be facts and above all, ones values". No teacher has experienced, as a student, a segregated TMH classroom. All have had, to varying degrees, successful academic backgrounds.

Birch and Elliott (1987, P.489) suggest that "the professional socialization [of the teacher] entails internalizing the shared meanings and values, the common role expectations and patterns of belief and behavior of academics or at least of teachers in those institutions the neophyte has experienced". As a teacher has experienced an academically oriented program as a student and all the teachers whom she has experienced have been academically oriented, it is not surprising that teachers believe that "academics are important" and therefore "academics are what teachers teach".

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1989, p.367), in a longitudinal study, describe prospective elementary teachers beliefs and characteristics. They report that elementary education majors typically cite "warmth, patience and a love of children as personal qualities that will make them effective teachers". They suggest that these pre-service teachers expect "to teach children like themselves, in schools that resemble the ones they attended". They indicate that teachers should examine their "beliefs about the strengths and needs of all pupils as well as the effects of various teaching strategies".

Porter and Brophy (1988, p. 76) state that the teachers personal experiences as a student are "important determinants of how teachers think and what they do'.

Howey and Zimpher (1989) conclude that many gaps exist in the pre-service curriculum for future teachers. They

suggest that there is a lack of opportunity for learning how to teach. This type of flaw can have devastating consequences for the developmentally delayed students to whom these teachers are assigned.

Sackney (1987, p. 515) suggests that "one of the most serious defects in the preparation of teachers is the failure on the part of teacher educators to recognize that theoretical studies cannot function prescriptively in the work of the teacher". Those teachers in this district who have some training in the area of special education had been given minimal opportunity for application of theory during their degree program.

Fullan (1982, p. 108) summarized the findings of several studies. From those he concluded that "teacher training does not equip teachers for the realities of the classroom". The new teacher is expected to assume the same responsibilities in September as the veteran teacher. Fullen also describes the isolation of teachers as contributing to a perception by some that student learning is determined "either by factors outside the teachers control (family background) or by unpredictable and mysterious influences".

Lakin and Bruininks (1985) have compared the more traditional approaches to the teaching of developmentally delayed persons with an approach in which an analysis of what the individual needs to know to increase his or her level of independence, self-care and social participation is

done. The traditional approach, which is still seen in many schools, starts with an assessment of the students status on a developmental hierarchy. The students are then instructed in the lowest level of skill they had not mastered in each domain.

They conclude that "...such orientations in isolation tend to produce developmentally disabled adults who exhibit many of the behaviors desired of dependent children or adults who become fixed at a skill level (e.g. reciting the alphabet) of very little benefit in their adult lives". (Lakin and Bruininks, 1985, P.18)

Teachers who had not been exposed to a rationale for teaching lifeskills to their students, who lacked appropriate teaching methodologies and who believed that academics are to taught to all students, would have had extreme difficulty developing appropriate programs and teaching their developmentally delayed students.

Chapter III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals were projected for this practicum: Teachers of developmentally delayed students in this district will obtain an understanding of the concept of lifeskills. The teachers will implement appropriate lifeskills programs for their developmentally delayed students. They will teach their students the skills necessary for independent or semi-independent living.

Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will state, on a post-test, (Appendix A) a definition of the term lifeskills with 100% accuracy.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will state, on a post test (Appendix B), at least five examples of lifeskills activities and related scenarios with 100% accuracy.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will design, on a post test, (Appendix C) at least three lesson plans for lifeskills activities. One hundred percent of those lesson

plans will include a practicum component in a real-life setting.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will design program plans for their students. One hundred percent of those program plans will include lifeskills as measured by the writer's observational checklist. (Appendix D)

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will implement the procedures presented during the implementation process with one hundred percent accuracy as measured by the writer's observational checklist. (Appendix D)

Measurement of Objectives

Teachers were asked to complete a post test. To demonstrate their understanding of the concept of lifeskills they were asked to define the term as well as to suggest a rationale for an approach. Teachers were asked to present their definitions to the group and the points presented were listed and copied for the group. The teachers were asked to describe five lifeskills activities and the teaching scenarios. Teachers were asked to share their examples with the group.

Each teacher was asked to develop lesson plans for teaching at least three of the suggested activities. They were required to include a practicum component in which their students could apply new skills in a real-life

setting. These were submitted to the writer, checked and shared with all teachers of developmentally delayed students in the district. The teachers worked in small groups for approximately two hours. They presented the outline to the group orally. The written copies were presented to the writer. They were checked, copied and shared with the group.

Each teacher, as a member of a program planning team for his/her students, was involved in designing individual program plans based on the strengths and needs of those students. The plans include annual goals and objectives designed to achieve those goals, criteria for mastery and teaching/learning environment. The writer visited each school to ensure that lifeskills are a part of each child's program. Approximately one month was assigned to the design of program plans.

Each teacher's program plans were reviewed and each teacher was observed teaching his/her students and implementing the program plans. Approximately three months was designated for this process.

A journal was kept during the practicum experience to record unanticipated events and/or outcomes.

Chapter IV

REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

A possible solution to the problem included the writer reviewing with teachers the district special education policy which outlines teacher responsibilities for designing individual program plans for developmentally delayed students. In addition to this possibility, the writer could have provided articles to the teachers on appropriate programming and lifeskills.

It has been indicated that "the negative attitudes which exist towards people with disabilities can be accounted for by two factors: (1) historical attitudes and (2) the hierarchical structure of society and the resulting low tolerance for individual differences". (Hutchinson and Lord, 1979,p.16) One of the historical attitudes towards a person who is developmentally delayed is to make him/her an object of pity. When a person is an object of pity he/she is usually overprotected and subject to low expectations.

> Many special education, vocational and recreational programs are guilty of such practices. These attitudes of fear and pity reflect prejudices which have little relationship to the needs, interests and abilities of those at the brunt of the discrimination. However, as with most prejudices, negative role perceptions are

> often maintained despite objective evidence from research, advocates and consumers supporting a contrary view. (Hutchinson and Lord, 1979, p.16)

Several of the teachers, who are well intentioned, did overprotect their students.

Falvey (1986, p. 61) states that "for years the 'experts' in special education, rehabilitation, medicine and other related areas have placed unnecessary restrictions and limitations on what can be expected...". Having the teachers read articles and discuss with the writer the appropriateness of lifeskills for the students would probably not put into practice the teaching of lifeskills.

Another possible solution might have been to arrange for the fourteen teachers to visit the teacher who had developed lifeskills programs for her students. To see a colleague demonstrating appropriate programming for her students may cause some of the teachers to think about lifeskills for their own students. It would not necessarily give them the wherewithal to put into practice the teaching of lifeskills.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The solution preferred by the writer was to develop an in-service package with opportunities for presentation of theory/practice and follow-up.

As teachers of developmentally delayed students were not teaching them the skills necessary for independent or

semi-independent living, changes in attitude as well as changes in practice were required. Change is "a process not an event"; therefore, the in-service package provided the greatest opportunity for the process of change to take place.

The staff of the Training for Independent Living Project (1978,p.1) suggest that there is a very basic philosophy underlying the concept of daily living skills. "The building of these skills leads to self-confidence and to the individuals' ability to function more and more normally with ever less dependency". The lack of training in independent living skills restricts individuals abilities to function outside of a limited environment.

The in-service was designed to provide the fifteen teachers with a rationale for a lifeskills approach to teaching their students. They were provided with models for the delivery of service to their students and the opportunity for discussion of the models with their colleagues. They were provided with a forum for discussion of the process. In the workshop setting, they were provided with materials and the opportunity to put theory into practice. The writer provided individual follow-up in the classroom setting and encouraged teachers who have students of similar ability to consult each other. A second workshop was provided to bring together teachers, ideas, materials, etc.

It has been assumed that staff development programs bring about change in the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of teachers. It has also been assumed that these programs bring about changes in teaching practice and student learning.

Guskey (1985) reports that these assumptions are inaccurate. He suggests that teachers attitudes and beliefs change when they see evidence of changes in their students. The teachers become committed to new programs after they see them working well and producing changes with their students.

Acquila and Galovic (1988) suggest that it requires more than knowledge of the benefits of a new program for teachers to make it a part of their teaching repetoire. Change involves risk-taking. The teachers involved in change, both those accepting of the change and those resistant, require on-going support and encouragement.

Guskey (1985) indicates that change is a slow, difficult and gradual process. Following the introduction to new programs, teachers need continued support and follow-up as well as feedback on student learning outcomes.

Fullen, (1982,P.79) explaining the process of change, indicates that "change is a highly personal experience - each and every one of the teachers who will be affected by change must have the opportunity to work through this experience in a way in which the rewards at least equal the cost". (p. 113) For change to work, he states that "teachers need to participate in skill-training workshops,

but they also need to have one-to-one and group opportunities to receive and give help, and more simply to converse about the meaning of change". (p.121)

The proposed solution strategy provided a supportive environment in which the process of change began to take place.

In September, 1989, the fifteen teachers attended a workshop given by the writer at the school district resource centre.

As many of the teachers were new to the district, introductions preceded the initial activity. The initial activity involved eliciting from the teachers their definitions of lifeskills. Following a discussion, the writer presented a rationale for teaching lifeskills. This presentation included a discussion of two short articles which were shared with the teachers. The two articles were: Lewis, P. (1989) A case for teaching functional skills in McLean, C. (Ed.) Council for exceptional children newsletter 5(1),9, and Hirshoren, A. and Burton, T. (1979) Teaching academic skills to trainable mentally retarded children: study in tautology. Mental retardation 17(4),177-179.

The writer reviewed pertinant sections of the school district special education policy and shared resource materials with the teachers.

The teachers were asked to compose a list of at least five lifeskills activities and were then matched with other teachers by their students' age/ability levels. They were

asked to work together to design lesson plans for teaching at least three of their lifeskills activities.

At the end of the day the teachers presented the individual lesson plan outlines to the writer who had them copied for all the teachers.

The teachers requested copies of some of the writer's resource materials. These have been provided.

The writer visited the classrooms of all the teachers at least once.

The second in-service day was held in November, 1989. The writer discussed and shared with the teachers several lifeskills programming models from other school districts. An opportunity was provided to address problems/concerns.

The teachers had been asked to prepare and bring with them a summary of data - strengths/needs for at least one of their students. The remainder of the day was spent working in groups, assisting each other to develop programs for those students. Each teacher shared a short summary of his/her work with the large group at the end of the day. The teachers were asked to share their understandings of the term lifeskills and to complete an evaluation of the two-day in-service.

Following the intervention, teachers of developmentally delayed students in this district, have the wherewithal to design and implement program plans which include the teaching of lifeskills, for their students.

Chapter V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will state, on a post-test (Appendix A) a definition of the term lifeskills with 100% accuracy. The fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students accurately stated a definition of the term lifeskills.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students wil state, on a post-test (Appendix B) at least five examples of lifeskills activities and related scenarios with 100% accuracy. The fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students accurately stated five examples of lifeskills activities and related scenarios.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will design, on a post-test (Appendix C) at least three lesson plans for lifeskills activities. One hundred percent of those lesson plans will include a practicum component in a real-life setting. The fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students, working in groups, designed at least three lesson plans for lifeskills activities. One hundred percent of those lesson plans included a practicum component in a real-life setting.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will design program plans for their students. One hundred percent of those program plans will include lifeskills as measured by the writer's observational checklist. (Appendix D) The fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students have designed program plans or have program plans in progress for their students. One hundred percent of the program plans include lifeskills.

Following practicum implementation, teachers of developmentally delayed students will implement the procedures presented during the implementation process with one hundred percent accuracy as measured by the writer's observational checklist. (Appendix D) Only twelve of the fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students have implemented the procedures presented during the implementation process with one hundred percent accuracy.

The procedures presented during the implementation process included individual program plan development according to the writer's district special education policy. This policy indicates that the process should include systemmatic observation, a review of the students learning strengths and needs, the development of long term goals and short term objectives, evaluation criteria and specified materials and resources. As measured by the writer's observational checklist twelve of the fifteen teachers (80%) used systemmatic observation techniques in their classrooms. Thirteen of the fifteen teachers (87%) provided a

comprehensive review of the students strengths and needs. While the fifteen teachers of developmentally delayed students developed long term goals including lifeskills for each student, only twelve wrote short term objectives and evaluation criteria and specified materials and resources.

All of the three teachers who had some difficulty with implementation when they returned to their classrooms were new to the teaching profession in September,1989. As the observations took place in October and November, 1989, they may not have had time to internalize the processes explored during the in-service sessions and make them part of their teaching repetoire.

The writer asked the fifteen teachers to complete an evaluation form following the second workshop day. (Appendix E)

All fifteen teachers stated that they had had a successful learning experience. The most valuable part of the two days, as reported by the teachers was the opportunity to share problems, concerns and ideas with other teachers of similar students and to work together to develop practical programs for their students.

All teachers suggested that future workshops should include opportunities to get together to share teaching strategies and techniques. This will be the format for a workshop to be held in Autumn, 1990.

Unexpected findings include a continuation of group projects and plans to organize a district-wide Special

Olympics. Two groups, one of four teachers and one of two teachers, have met several times to continue projects started during the workshops. This involves a round trip of ninety-five kilometres. They have arranged visits for their students to other schools and communities. During these visits, the students have used the gymnasium, visited shops and attended social functions.

In consultation with the writer and the school district physical education coordinator, the larger group is organizing and preparing to host a regional Special Olympics in Spring, 1990, for the developmentally delayed students of the district.

Conclusions

Teachers, who were not systemmatically teaching their developmentally delayed students the skills necessary for independent or semi-independent living, have now incorporated life skills into their students' programs.

Teachers of developmentally delayed students who have previously been isolated from each other because of distance have formed information networks in which they share teaching strategies and techniques and provide support for each other.

Six of the fifteen teachers have arranged visits for their students to schools in other communities. Four of those teachers are in the beginning stages of organizing a

Special Olympics for the developmentally delayed students of the district.

In an evaluation of the two day workshop, all of the fifteen teachers rated it a positive learning experience. All of the teachers requested that this type of in-service be repeated in the future.

Although all of the objectives were not achieved with 100% accuracy, the process is continuing. To expect that all teachers would gain the same degree of proficiency in designing program plans when all were not starting from the same point may have been unrealistic.

Recommendations

The process worked extremely well with the more experienced teachers. The teachers who had most difficulty were those who had the least classroom experience. The writer recommends that visits to the classrooms of the the more experienced teachers should be arranged for new teachers prior to in-service. This would provide them with practical examples of lifeskills being taught. The more experienced teacher, acting as mentor, would assist the new teacher through the process of program plan development. The writer intends to include this recommendation in future in-service for teachers of developmentally delayed students.

Dissemination

During a meeting with fellow special services coordinators from other districts, the writer was asked to bring a progress report to a regional meeting for discussion. The writer has agreed to do this during Spring, 1990.

REFERENCES

Alberta Department of Education (1982) Trainable mentally handicapped curriculum guide. Edmonton: Government of Alberta.

Alberta Department of Education (1983) Dependent handicapped curriculum guide. Edmonton: Government of Alberta.

Aquila, G. and Galovic, J. (1988, March) The principal as change agent: Encouraging teachers to adopt change. NASSP bulletin. 50-53.

Baine, D. (1988). Handicapped children in developing countries: Assessment, curriculum and instruction. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta.

Birch, D. and Elliott, M. (1987). Towards a new conception of teacher education. in Hewin, L. and McCann, S. (Eds.) Contemporary education issues: The Canadian mosaic. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman Ltd.

Browder, D., Hines, C., McCarthy, L. and Fees, J. (1984). A treatment package for increasing sight word recognition for use in daily living skills. Education and Training of the mentally retarted. 19(3), 191-200.

Browder, D. and Snell, M. (1983). Daily living skills. in Snell, M. (Ed.) Systematic instruction of the moderately and severely handicapped. 2nd edition. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.

Boyan, C. (1978). A flexible approach to career development: Balancing vocational training and training for independent living. Education and training of the mentally retarded. 13(2), 209-213.

Falvey, M. (1986). Community based curriculum instructional strategies for students with severe handicaps. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Feiman-Nemser, S. and Buchmann, M. (1989). Describing teacher education: a framework and illustrative findings from a longitudinal study of six students. The elementary school journal. 89(3), 365-377.

Fullen, M. (1982). The meaning of educational change. Toronto: OISE Press/The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Guskey, T. (1985, April). Staff development and teacher change. Educational leadership. 57-60.

Hirshoren, A. and Burton, T. (1979). Teaching academic skills to trainable mentally retarded children: A study in tautology. Mental retardation. 17(4), 177-179.

Howey, K. and Zimpher, N. (1989). Preservice teacher educator's role in programs for beginning teachers. The elementary school journal. 89(4), 451-470.

Hutchison, P. and Lord, J. (1979). Recreation integration: issues and alternatives in leisure services and community involvement. Ottawa: Leisurability Publications Inc.

Lakin K. And Bruininks, R. (eds.) (1985). Strategies for achieving community integration of developmentally disabled citizens. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Langone, J. and Burton, T. (1987). Teaching adaptive behavior skills to moderately and severely handicapped individuals: best practices for facilitating independent living. The journal of special education. 21(1), 149-165.

Lewis, P. (1989). A case for teaching functional skills. in McLean, C. (ed.). Council for exceptional children newsletter. 5(1), 9.

Luscre, D. (1984). Community skills training for moderately and severely handicapped students. Gwinnett County, Georgia: The Gwinnett County Special Education Department.

Middletown Public Schools, Connecticut (1985). Career ladder: core curriculum. Hartford: Connecticut State Board of Education.

Nietupski, J., Hanre-Nietupski, S., Green, K., Narnum-Teeter, K., Twedt, B., LePera, D., Schbold, K., and Hanrahan, M. (1986). Self-initiated and sustained leisure activity preparation for students with moderate/severe handicaps. Education and training of the mentally retarded. 21(14), 259-264.

Porter, A., and Brophy, J., (1988). Synthesis of research on good teaching: Insights from the work of the institute for research on teaching. Educational leadership. 45(8), 74-85.

Sackney, L. (1987). Teacher training: an exploration of some issues and a direction for model development. In Hewin, L. and McCann, S. Contemporary educational issues: the Canadian mosaic. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman Ltd.

Schuster, J. (1988). Cooking instruction with persons labelled mentally retarded: A review of the literature.

Education and training in mental retardation. 23(1), 43-50.

Snell, M. (1978). Systematic instruction of the moderately and severely handicapped. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill.

Snell, M. (1988, December). Curriculum and methodology for individuals with severe disabilities. Education and training in mental retardation. 302-314.

Stowitschek, J. and Salsberg, C. (1987). Job success for handicapped youth: A Social protocol curriculum. Reston: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Teacher Education Review Committee (1987, November). Meeting the challenge: Future needs in teacher education. Clarenville: Bonavista-Trinity-Placentia Integrated School Board.

Training for Independent Living Staff at Oxnard, CA (1978). Training for independent living. Camarillo, CA: Ventura County Association for the Retarded.

Vaughn, S., Bos, C. and Lund, K. (1986, Spring). ...But they can do it in my room: Strategies for promoting generalization. Teaching exceptional children. 176-180.

Wilgosh, L. and French, C. (1984). Parent, teacher and employer ratings of specific skills in a career education curriculum for moderately mentally handicapped (TMH) students. Canadian journal for exceptional children. 1(2), 52-55.

Wolfensberger, W. (1972). The principle of normalization in human services. Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Post-Test

Appendix A

1. Define the term lifeskills.
2. Suggest a rationale for teaching lifeskills.

APPENDIX B
Post-Test

Appendix B

1. Suggest five lifeskills activities which would be appropriate for your students.

2. How could you teach these skills? Suggest scenarios.

APPENDIX C
Post-Test

Appendix C

1. With your group, design lesson plans for teaching three of the lifeskills activities previously discussed. Lesson plans should be complete.

APPENDIX D
Observational Checklist

Appendix D

Observational Checklist

1.	Uses systematic observation techniques to collect data	yes no
2.	Selects an appropriate recording format to collect data	yes no
3.	Provides a comprehensive review of students learning capabilities	yes no
4.	Develops long term goals including lifeskills for each student	yes no
5.	Writes clear and specific behavioral objectives	yes no
6.	Specifies evaluation criteria for each objective and methods of evaluation	yes no
7.	Specifies materials and resources needed for each objective	yes no
8.	Ensures that the objectives and strategies in each program area are matched to the student's strengths and needs	yes no
9.	Designs a cohesive program plan which matches content and teaching strategies with students individual differences	yes no
10.	Implements a differentiated curriculum according to students individual program plans	yes no
11.	Ensures that all "lifeskills" training includes a practicum component in a "real" setting	yes no
12.	Adjusts objectives, materials and resources in ongoing program plan development	yes no

APPENDIX E
Evaluation Form

Appendix E

Evaluation Form

1. This two-day workshop was a successful learning experience for me. yes_____ no_____

   Comments:

2. The most valuable part of the workshop was:

3. The least valuable part of the workshop was:

4. Suggestions with respect to modifications and/or improvements:

5. Suggested follow-up and future activities:

6. Other comments:

7. My overall rating of this workshop: